



NEWS RELEASE

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Veterans Equity Compensation: Over 12,800 Veterans Have Received 7.2 Billion Pesos

February 16, 2010 was the final day for Filipino WWII veterans to apply for one-time benefits created by the 2009 Filipino Veterans Equity Compensation provision of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. As of February 16, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) had approved the applications of 12,846 eligible Filipino WWII veterans; these qualified veterans or their widows have been paid a total of nearly P7.2 billion.

Between February 17, 2009 and February 16, 2010, USDVA held 22 outreach events in partnership with Philippine Veterans Affairs Office (PVAO) offices around the Philippines. USDVA-Manila Director Jon Skelly and his staff appeared in dozens of TV and radio interviews to explain the benefit and the process, and to remind veterans of the application deadline. The USDVA office remained open on Monday, February 15, when other Embassy offices were closed for the George Washington's Birthday Holiday. USDVA teams were also stationed at PVAO in Quezon City.

"Thanks to the Philippine news media and our partners at the Philippine Veterans Affairs Office, we were able to get the word out about the benefit to veterans living all over the Philippines and in the United States," said Director Skelly. "We had thousands of applicants on the final two days at our office and at PVAO, so we really did get the word out."

Approximately half of the nearly P7.2 billion in one-time benefits paid out so far has gone to Filipino WWII veterans with American citizenship, and the other half to non-U.S. citizen Filipino WW II veterans. To date, of some 40,000 applications received, around 7,000 have been duplicate applications, and 14,500 cases remain pending. Those cases will be adjudicated without delay, so that qualified veterans will get their benefit as quickly as possible. The USDVA-Manila staff includes 222 Filipino employees, working hard every day to serve these honored veterans.

Veterans who have already applied for this one-time benefit will receive an acknowledgement receipt from USDVA. There is no need to obtain additional military service information unless requested by USDVA.

"We continue to pay around \$8 million monthly in previous and continuing benefits to Filipino veterans and their family members," said Mr. Skelly. "My staff will gladly review records of individual Filipino WW II veterans or their survivors because we want to make sure these heroes are receiving all benefits to which they are entitled," he added.

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